



Department of Justice

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COLUMBUS MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FAILURE TO REGISTER AS SEX OFFENDER

COLUMBUS –Frank M. Benton, Jr., age 39, of Columbus, pleaded guilty in United States District Court here today to one count of interstate travel and failure to register as a sex offender.

Gregory G. Lockhart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, James M. Wahlrab, United States Marshal for the Southern District of Ohio, and Franklin County Sheriff Jim Karnes announced the plea entered before United States District Judge Gregory L. Frost.

Benton pleaded guilty in December 2000 in Franklin County Common Pleas Court to one count of sexual battery and served one year of incarceration. Upon his release from prison, Benton signed the Notice of Registration Duties of Sexually Oriented Offender or Child-Victim Offender (SORN) Form that classified him a sexual predator and notified him of his duty to register in Ohio as a sex offender for his lifetime with verification every 90 days.

Benton moved to Knox County, Tennessee in February, 2007 and registered as a sexual offender there. When he moved back to Ohio in July, 2007, he failed to register in Ohio. He was arrested in July 2008 and has been in custody since his arrest.

Benton faces a possible sentence of ten years in federal prison, a fine of up to \$250,000 and the possibility of supervised release for the rest of his life.

SORNA is part of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act in 2006. The law requires anyone convicted of sex crimes under federal law, or anyone convicted in state court and traveling in interstate commerce, to register with law enforcement agencies where they live, work or are a student.

Lockhart commended the investigation by the U.S. Marshals Service, Franklin County Sheriff's Deputies, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Deborah Solove, who is prosecuting the case.

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